

In the Specification:

[0015] Fig. 2 shows a bare strap 20 of the prior art next to a covered strap 12. The cover 12 is preferably applied over the strap 20 before it is put on an animal. The cover 12 is made of a material selected for its anti-chafe and washability characteristics. Although other materials could be used, the preferred materials include polar fleece, fleece, cotton, synthetic blended fabric, sheepskin, leather, suede, Lycra, natural and synthetic fabrics, textiles, and blends thereof. One can also select the fabric for its ability to stretch in one or more directions. For example, fleece stretches in only one direction, but Lycra stretches in two. It may be advantageous to select one over the other ~~over~~ where material is found to have a tendency to bunch up in particular situations.

[0016] The material is cut into a rectangle, which is then formed into a tube by securing two opposite ends. Each end of the formed tube may be secured by snaps, hook and loop fasteners, ties, by sewing, or any other suitable securing means. Therefore, the ends may be removably secured, or permanently secured. As shown in Fig. 2, one embodiment has the ends 30 stitched ~~30~~ together by sewing.

[0017] Metal shackles 16a, 16b are typically attached to the ends of the strap 20. The cover 12 of the present invention preferably has a securing mechanism 18 at each end of the cover. The securing mechanism 18 can engage the ends of the strap 20, engage the shackles 16a, 16b as shown in Fig. 2, or even engage the blanket 10 itself. The securing mechanism can be any suitable mechanism for securing a fabric cover to a strap, shackle, or blanket, but is preferably at least one taken from the group including hook and loop fasteners, ~~e.g. VELCRO(r)~~, ties, and snaps.